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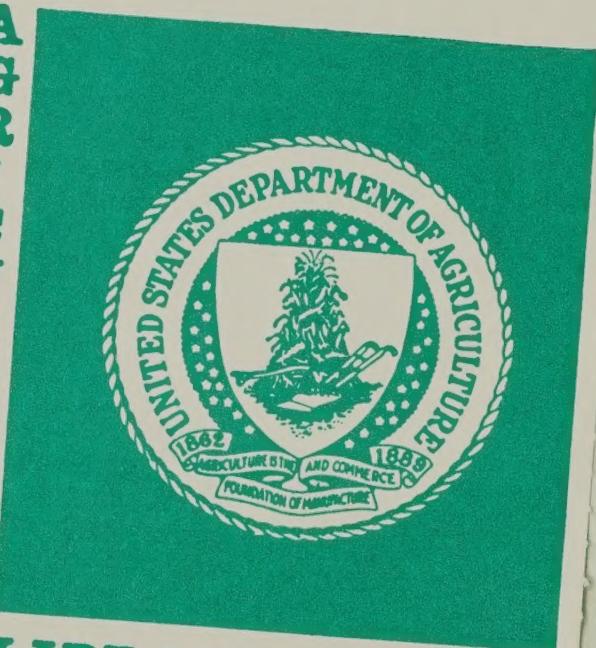


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# Inspect Cattle for Rabies...

EAR-ROUND THREAT

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## **Still a Problem**

Psoroptic cattle scabies is a year-round problem. Although the scabs themselves often disappear in the summer when the mites are less active, this improvement is only temporary. If the disease is not then detected and treated, scabs will come back with the return of winter.

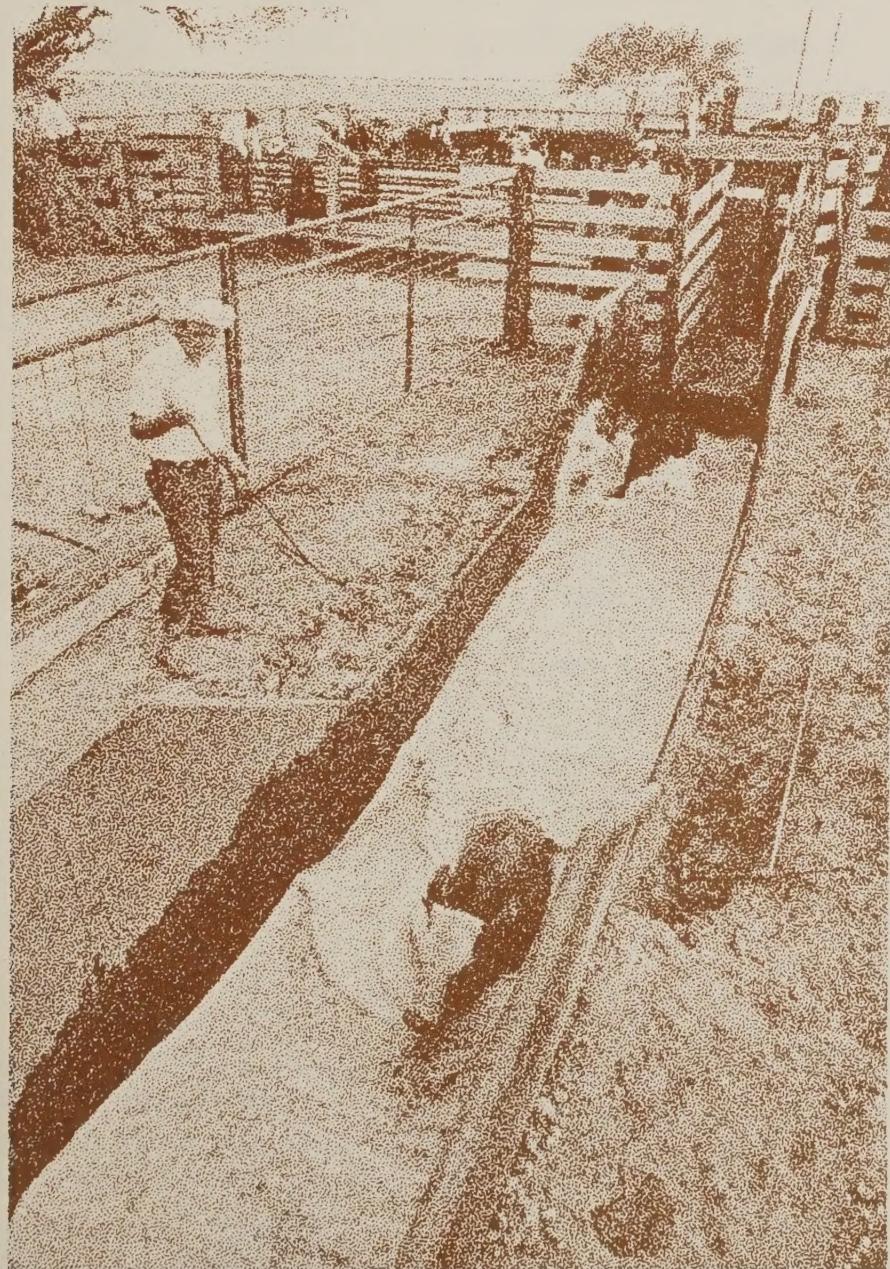
- Scabies, a contagious disease that spreads by contact, is caused by tiny, parasitic mites that puncture the skin of cattle and feed on the body fluids released from the wounds. These fluids ooze from the wounds, dry, and become mixed with sloughed skin to form scabs. Hence, the name "scabies."
- As the mites increase in number, the animal's hair falls out, the lesions spread and, if not treated, the entire body may become covered with thick, rough crusts. Heavy infestations may cause death.
- Cattle scabies, also known as common scab, was prevalent in range cattle in the western States until about 1938. But cooperative State-Federal eradication programs have eliminated the disease from large sections of the United States. Today, most outbreaks are found in the Southwest and Midwest.

## **Scabies Costs You**

- Quarantines must be placed on infested ranches and feedlots. Infested cattle have to be dipped.
- In Texas Panhandle feedlots, pesticide costs alone varied from 40 to 80 cents a head, depending upon the season and whether a spray-dip machine or a vat was used. Three men can vat-dip 100 head of cattle an hour compared to the five needed to treat 35 cattle an hour using the spray-dip.
- Operators of quarantined feedlots must comply with regulations and see that all trucks hauling their cattle are cleaned and disinfected—all of which cost an Oklahoma feedlot operator \$160 extra just for the 20 trucks he used to haul 800 head of cattle to market.
- Scabies-infested cattle gain less but require more feed, resulting in higher production costs. Tests have shown that 100 additional

days of feeding are required to bring untreated, infested cattle to marketable condition.

- In Colorado, an average scabies outbreak costs a feedlot operator \$50 a head, counting all factors, including current cattle prices, feed consumption, weight loss, pesticide, dipping, extra labor. An outbreak costs a Colorado rancher about half as much.
- Other cost factors . . .
  - When treated with toxaphene, cattle must be withheld from slaughter for 28 days, thus adding to feed costs and possible lower markets.
  - Infested cattle are more prone to respiratory problems, including pneumonia.
  - Cattle often sustain injuries during handling and treatment (dipping).
  - Damaged hides resulting from infected mite wounds bring lower prices.



## **Watch for . . .**

- Constant tail switching
- Licking
- Rubbing against objects
- Scratching
- Scabby sores
- Hair patches on fences

## **If Scabies Mites Are Found**

- Your premises will be quarantined.
- All infested and exposed cattle must be dipped in USDA-permitted pesticide under supervision.
- Infested cattle must be dipped twice at 14-day intervals before interstate shipments are allowed.
- Exposed cattle can move interstate for any purpose after proper treatment. Authorized inspectors who certify animals can advise owners about such interstate shipments.
- All grounds, barns, corrals, and other areas used by affected cattle must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Spray all exposed surfaces of buildings with a recommended dip or disinfectant.

## **Prevent Scabies**

### **. . . In Summer And In Winter**

- Buy cattle only from clean herds
- As a precaution, dip newly-purchased cattle before adding them to your herd or feedlot
- Watch your cattle closely for signs of scabies.

*If you notice signs of infestation . . .*

**CALL YOUR VETERINARIAN**

*. . . for expert examination, diagnosis and advice*

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Veterinary Services  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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